



Drug Induced Death Rates, Age-Adjusted Clark County and Washington State, 1994 through 2001

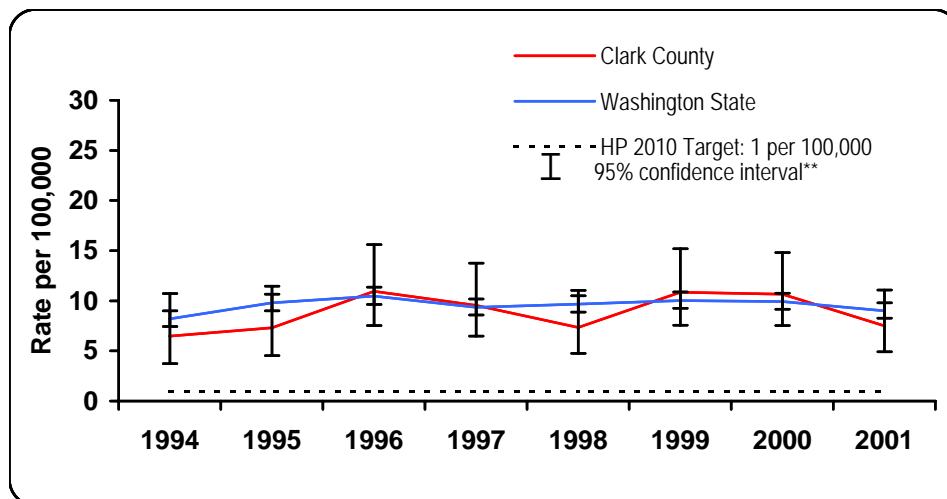
Why we should care? We hear that, "drugs kill." This truism refers both to deaths attributable to drug overdoses and other fatal effects arising from drug use and also to the large number of murders associated with the drug trade. Preventing deaths of both these types is presumably one of the goals of our drug laws and their enforcement. (1)

Status?

- In Clark County, drug induced deaths are on a decline.
- Since 1994, Clark County has only two occurrences when they have surpassed the State rate.

What we can do?

- The State of Washington rivals New Mexico in its drug policy reform pace, enacting six reforms since 1996, ranging from legalizing medical marijuana to decriminalizing the sale and possession of syringes. (5)
- In 2002, the legislature passed legislation cutting the sentences of various non-violent drug offenses and using the savings (estimated to be \$50 million over the next six years) to fund drug treatment programs. The legislation also implements a new sentencing grid in 2004 that will give judges more sentencing discretion. (5)



Year	Clark County			Washington State		
	Rate*	95% CI**	Number	Rate*	95% CI**	Number
1994	6.48	(3.7, 10.73)	17	8.19	(7.44, 9.00)	445
1995	7.32	(4.54, 11.45)	22	9.80	(9.00, 10.67)	551
1996	10.94	(7.53, 15.61)	34	10.48	(9.65, 11.36)	595
1997	9.53	(6.47, 13.76)	31	9.35	(8.57, 10.18)	540
1998	7.34	(4.76, 11.04)	25	9.66	(8.88, 10.50)	568
1999	10.84	(7.57, 15.19)	36	10.03	(9.24, 10.87)	594
2000	10.67	(7.54, 14.81)	38	9.94	(9.15, 10.77)	599
2001	7.49	(4.92, 11.06)	27	9.01	(8.27, 9.8)	551

Please see reverse side for technical notes and sources



Technical Notes: The age-adjusted death rate is defined as the number of deaths per 100,000 standard population after removing the effects of age on mortality.

*Rate per 100,000 population adjusted using the 2000 U.S. Standard Population; deaths coded using ICD 10.

** If the confidence intervals for state and county overlap in a given year, there is no significant difference between these rates.

Sources: (1) Center for Alcohol and Addiction Studies: Drug Law Enforcement Expenditures and Drug-Related Deaths. Retrieved 5/21/03 from URL: <http://www.druglibrary.org/schaffer/other/deathsbucks.htm> (2) Vital Registration System, Annual Statistics Files, Deaths 1994-2001. [Data file]. Olympia, WA: Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics. (3) Public Health: Seattle & King County, Epidemiology, Planning, & Evaluation. (1991-2003). VistaPHw (version 3.1.1) [Computer software for public health assessment]. Seattle, WA. (4) Drug Policy Foundation. (1993) Choose health, not war: drug policy in transition. Washington, DC: Author. (5) Drug Policy Alliance. Retrieved 5/21/03 from URL: <http://www.drugpolicy.org/statebystate/washington/>